

Sketchbook Exercise Ideas: Starting with Magazine Imagery

These sketchbook exercise ideas were inspired by the working practices of [Jonathon Ford](#) and **Madelaine Murphy**. Both artists, working independently of each other, use imagery from magazines, books, news papers and pamphlets to help trigger thought processes and create imagery in their sketchbooks.

[Overview](#)

[When to use this activity](#)

[How to present this activity](#)

Overview

This workshop activity is a great way to generate content quickly, and so give pupils something which they can both reflect on and feel confident about. But just because the imagery comes relatively quickly, doesn't mean it is meaningless. The element of personal choice is crucial to this activity. As pupils make choices about which kinds of imagery they want to select or collect, they are beginning to think about their likes, dislikes and personal preferences. As pupils sort the imagery, they begin to make decisions about presentation, context and meaning, and as they then work in to the imagery, and make it their own, they begin to experience what it is like to think laterally, to manipulate (a crucial skill), to invent (and re-invent), and to take responsibility for the way something is then seen, and the new meanings it presents.

When to use this activity

This activity can be used in a variety of ways:

- to start off a new project - to generate images quickly and effectively
- to help pupils gain confidence in what their sketchbooks can look like, and to help them realise they have got something to say
- as a stand alone sketchbook exercise or icebreaker
- as a tool to help pupils begin to *think around* a certain theme or project
- when someone reaches a sticky point and they need a gentle shove or breath of fresh air!

How to use this activity

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